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ABSTRACT

Various aspects of child-rearing are covered in this transcript of a program broadcast in the National Public Radio weekly series, "Options in Education." Authors of current popular books on parenting are interviewed. Benjamin Spock discusses changes (including sex role revisions) in his "Baby and Child Care" since the 1946 first edition. Eda LeShan, author of "In Search of Myself and Other Children", explains why she believes the best way to raise children is by remembering how one feels to be a child. The benefits of infant massage are discussed by Frederick LeBoyer. In his book, "Loving Hands", he describes how maternal physical contact helps a baby adjust from womb to outside world. Jean Curtis discusses the subject of her book, "Working Mothers". Also included are Dorothy and Raymond Moore, whose "Better Late Than Early" advocates a late start in formal schooling, keeping children at home until the age of eight or ten. Estell Rubin discusses her book, "The Divorced Father", and Brian Sutton Smith talks about education and the family of the future. (Author/BF)

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THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

TRANSCRIPT FOR PROGRAM SCHEDULED FOR BROADCAST

THE WEEK OF AUGUST 23, 1976

Program #42

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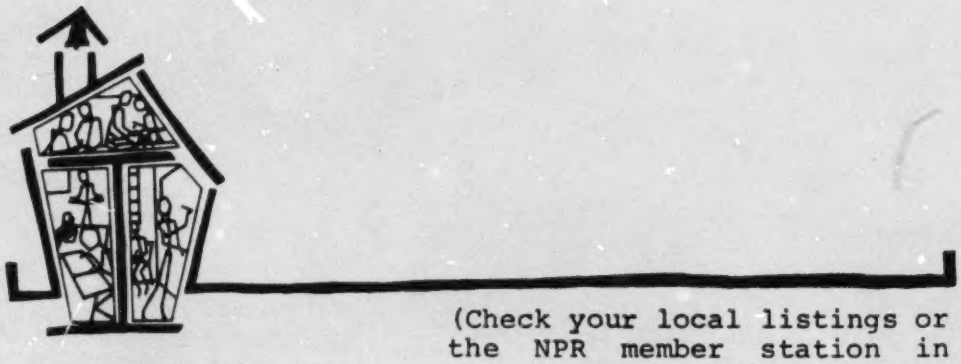

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PARENTING

Program #42

(OPENING MUSICAL THEME)

BLAIR: I'm Wendy Blair with NPR's OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is a news magazine about all the issues in education -- from the ABC's of preschool to the alphabet soup of government programs. If you've ever been to school, we have something that will interest you.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow. This year approximately 6 million Americans will have children and begin charting a course for the next generation. So, this week's OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is about learning to be a parent.

(MUSIC - "Be Kind to Your Parents")

AUTHOR: The average, normal, good parent, by picking up a book, such as ours, can get all the suggestions that they need.

AUTHOR: There was so much that was being written which was so stereotyped and, you know, raising children by formula. It was so dehumanizing.

AUTHOR: I would say that whenever a mother goes to any book, she's on the level of information and memory, and she's lost.

AUTHOR: And we found that there was nothing written for father, that the father was the neglected man.

BLAIR: Those comments are from authors of a few of the hundreds of books written on the subject of parenting. For years, we all assumed that everyone knew how to be a mother or father, just by watching their own parents. But now we know that not all mothers and fathers are <u>good</u> role models. So, we don't take parenting for granted anymore.

Momentous changes have occurred since Dr. Spock first wrote about baby and child care -- the post-war baby boom, birth control, women's movement, rise in divorce, and the popularization of Freudian psychology. Now, for child care, like everything else, we look to experts for advice.

MERROW: Even though Americans are having fewer and fewer children, the market for books on babies is booming. On this program NPR's Susan Stamberg talks with several authors of child care manuals. First, America's best known pediatrician, Dr. Benjamin Spock.

<u>DR. BENJAMIN SPOCK</u>

SPOCK: The most daring thing from the first edition of the book was to give so much advice in the book. I was Freudian trained, and I was the first person to write a child care book, I think, that had a whole lot of psychoanalytic principles in it. I was scared to death.

MERROW: Dr. Spock is no longer the unquestioned expert on children. Spock's been criticized for being too lenient, too political and sexist. He would probably agree that the one thing that the multitude of new books on child care proves is that there is no one right way to do it. Spock talks about his changing ideas.

SPOCK: For 22 years I was not accused of being permissive, and then after I began opposing the war in Vietnam more strenuously, I was indicted by the federal government. Then, the accusation that I'm permissive began. It came first from Reverend Norman Vincent Peale who preached a sermon just a few weeks after I was indicted, saying that the whole irresponsibility and lack of discipline of youths -- by which he meant their opposition to the war in Vietnam -- was because when they were babies I told their parents to give them instant gratification. Those two words "instant gratification" absolutely proved to me that he never looked at Baby and Child Care at all.

STAMBERG: You said, "If the child's crying, pick him up and try to comfort him." You didn't say do that for four hours while he cried.

SPOCK: That's right.

STAMBERG: We get into a tyranny, almost, of expertise, don't we?

SPOCK: I think that's one of the most difficult things about raising children in America today, and a very unfortunate thing for parents that so many professional people sort of muscled into the child-rearing act -- psychologists, child psychiatrists, pediatricians like myself -- all telling parents we've studied this, and these are our ideas. And, though I don't think they intended to rob parents of their self-assurance, certainly that was one of the effects that came about. It made parents feel "I haven't studied -- therefore, I'm more likely to make a mistake than to do right."

STAMBERG: I want to know how that fact makes you feel, because you were the first person to do it. This was the first book of its kind to come out. In 1946, it hit just at the right moment, the baby boom. People were turning to you to be their expert, to give them the advice. You're encyclopedic in a way. You can look in your index and look up "Ear ache" when the child is holding his ear and screaming, and you're a front-line approach to that child's agony. You tell them just what to do in a moment. You've had to live with that now for thirty years or so -- how is that? What's that like, to be everybody's expert on children?

SPOCK: I think if I'd known it was going to sell nearly a million copies a year, I would have been very frightened, and I'm not sure I would have dared put it out for fear of a number of people I would mislead. Actually, it's, of course, now that I've learned that people haven't killed their children, or even seriously injured their children by using the book, it's a great comfort. And I've loved the fact that parents who've used the book have found it helpful and been reassured by it. I don't know if you were asking the question whether I was one of those who robbed parents of their self-assurance. I think all of the professional people, as a body, helped to undermine parental self-confidence. I was aware at the time I was writing it that this was the problem and tried to work in the other direction.

You know, I started out by saying "trust yourself -- you know more than you think you do -- don't pay too much attention to what the experts say, especially when the experts are arguing with each other." So, all the way through, I tried to play down the omniscience of experts, but I think that my book was insufficent to counteract the general lack of self-assurance of so many parents. Fortunately, it wasn't all by any means, especially the highly educated ones, who have what I would call an "over respect for education" and those who didn't have great natural self-assurance anyway -- especially those sensitive people who felt that they didn't want to bring their children up in many ways the way they were raised. And they didn't want their children to resent them the way they resented their parents. I think that, too, gave sensitive parents this feeling that a parent is likely -- if the parent acts as a parent at all -- to make children resentful. And I think that's one of the reasons why so many parents sort of leaned over backwards not to be firm, not to be definite, not to be clear. I think in many magazine articles since and in the revision of the book, I keep coming back to the fact -- when parents are clear to their children, it not only makes better behaved children, but happier children -- no question about that in my mind. And that doesn't mean you have to be oppressive.

I think that's the trouble. So many people think, either you have to be oppressive severe, or you'll have a spoiled brat. And it isn't true at all. I know hundreds of families who brought up very cooperative, very polite children, where it's been done with great assurance on the parents' part, without any severity at all.

BLAIR: Dr. Benjamin Spock, author of Baby and Child Care, talking with NPR's Susan Stamberg.

> MOTHER: I bought Dr. Spock's latest edition, which I never thought I'd ever buy, but I did, and I learned a lot from reading that. But, I don't know, I'm not really very baby-oriented, so I don't read a lot of experts. You know, we took the child birth education courses, which were educational for us, primarily -- you know, how to react to labor and how to react to delivery and what was going on, and I think that that sort of education was incredibly helpful.

BLAIR: That mother's ideas point to a dominant theme in the new concern over how to parent -- ignorance is not bliss. Expectant mothers and fathers attend child birth classes, form discussion groups, and read books on everything from toys to toilet training. And that's a lot of curiosity.

Eda LeShan is the author of In Search of Myself and Other Children. After writing many how-to books, LeShan came to the conclusion that the best way to raise children is to remember how it feels to be a child. Maybe we don't need so many experts, LeShan explains to Susan Stamberg.

EDA LeSHAN

LeSHAN: It suddenly occurred to me that maybe the best things I've ever learned about children are what I've learned about myself as a child.

STAMBERG: And you talk about how parents are almost paranoid and how they run from one formula book to the other. Every year new books come out -- more and more of them -- deluges of them.

LeSHAN: This comes of terror and guilt, of having been brain washed to believe that there is some magical formula by which you can do it right.

STAMBERG: And there's some expert on the outside who's going to tell you the formula.

LeSHAN: That's right -- and the expert is really on the inside.

STAMBERG: So, spend the money, spend the time, spend the attention at those early ages, so the kids grow up feeling good about themselves, and they're able to do anything, learn anything.

LeSHAN: Exactly.

STAMBERG: And cooperate and be responsible.

LeSHAN: It's a question of priorities. I think that the whole emphasis on early cognitive training on children learning how to read, write and know numbers and letters of the alphabet, and so forth, when they're two, three, four years old, is totally inappropriate, that that's the time for self discovery, for learning to enjoy taking risks, learning to tolerate failure as an adult. I think if one is going to do a decent job as a parent one has to constantly be in touch with that sense of how did I feel about myself as a child -- am I reading things into my child's behavior -- or am I doing the same things all over again? I think the important distinction for parents to get in touch with this and have some sensitivity to it is to make the distinction between being bad and being young -- that a child is selfish or that a child is afraid, or a child bites another child, or whatever -- if you say, "You're a bad, mean kid, and nobody's going to love you like that," then you certainly are interfering with the child's perception of himself as lovable. And, on the other hand, if you say, "You know what, you're very little, and you can't stop yourself" -- and that's what grown-ups are for. The reason children have their mommies and daddies is because sometimes you get feelings that you can't control, and that's what we're here for. We won't let you bite the baby, or we won't let you take the toy away from the other child. It's not because you're bad -- you're just little, and you will learn how to control such feelings.

You see, there's a world of difference between those two ways of approaching the same problem.

STAMBERG: That's so simple. We all ought to know that. Why did you have to live as long as you've lived, write as many books as you did, and go through all those years of psychotherapy? Darn it! That should be one of the most obvious things in the world to us.

LeSHAN: It is simple, and you know the crazy part of it is, sometimes I have a feeling after all these 300 years of talking to parents it feels like that -- to come to the essence of what I believe -- and then, I find that it sounds so saccharine that I'm afraid that everybody will go into a diabetic coma.

But the truth of the matter is, that all I have distilled from all these years of studying children and working with parents is that a human being who has compassion for himself and can nourish his own life and loves the child he was and loves the person he is, can give that to other people. And that's really all it comes down to. It sounds kind of simple, but I guess it's the most profound idea there is.

BLAIR: Eda LeShan, author of In Search of Myself and Other Children.

MOTHER: I'm the oldest of seven children. That was one thing that helped prepare me, I guess, for being a parent. But it's different, being the oldest and being a parent, because all of a sudden, you love your parents so much more, because you realize what they did for you. You realize they really worked for you. Right now, TJ is nearly 3. Next month he'll be 3, and Brady is 4 days old. I want them to have enough brains to make it in life, for it not to be difficult for them, and I want them to have as much happiness as possible, but to know that everything is not easy -- that there's a big road that they have to travel, and I want to prepare them.

MERROW: Dr. Spock's first book was typical of the late forties and early fifties -- then everyone was looking for scientific information on how to do things right. In the 1970's, however, many people are turning back to feeling and intuition. French pediatrician Frederick Leboyer represents this movement. Leboyer, author of Birth Without Violence, says: "Babies need warmth, darkness, music, and physical contact with the mother at birth -- not a too sterile hospital environment."

LeBOYER: We know that the primary basic need of a baby -- more important even than food -- is physical contact with the mother's body -- touch, touch, touch.

MERROW: Leboyer talked with Wendy about his new book, Loving Hands. He believes that physical contact with the mother helps the baby adjust to the change of life from womb to outside world.

FREDERICK LeBOYER

BLAIR: Why baby massage?

LeBOYER: In the womb most of the physical sensations of the fetus, of the young child, are perceived through the skin and muscles and bones of the back. It is this sort of continuous massage which is done by the contractions of the womb, and the baby in the womb is receiving continuously external sensations..

BLAIR: There's something around the skin all the time.

LeBOYER: Exactly -- all around the body. And once the baby is born, or rather, after he is born and left to itself in a cradle or in the crib, nothing comes from outside. It's all dead. There is another newness, which is the feeling of hunger.

To balance, to harmonize inside and outside, you have to give external sensations to a newborn baby. You have to rock them. You have to hold them. You have to caress them, and massage them. So, whenever a baby wakes up and starts crying, screaming, it's not necessarily meaning "I'm hungry." Rather it is, "I'm hungry after sensations." And you know very well that if you are properly fed in life and healthy that's not enough.

BLAIR: You use oil which has been warmed, if it's in the winter time. You sit always on the floor -- why?

LeBOYER: Unless you are properly centered, this massage will be only a technique, and it's not going to help. If you are properly centered, then you will really connect with the baby, and extraordinary things are going to happen, very simple things. The skin of the baby is to be in touch with the skin of your legs. The skin-to-skin contact is extremely important.

BLAIR: And how old is the baby when you begin to do this massaging?

LeBOYER: Well, you have to start right from the moment of birth, every day. But for the first days or the first weeks, let us say, it's rather a gentle stroking. And you can even forget about the technique -- gentle stroking of the whole body. And you might say that from the moment the baby is one month old, then you feel that you can begin to completely follow the technique. A little sprinkling of cold water afterward is necessary, on the head, maybe on the hands, so that the baby doesn't fall asleep, because this massage can have two effects, according to the way it is done. Either it is stimulating or relaxing, and if it is done twice a day, morning and evening, if it is done in the evening, it can be so relaxing that right afterward the baby goes to sleep.

People ask me, "Is it going to improve the blood circulation of the baby?" Yes, it's going to do that. "Is it going to improve the health of the baby?" Yes, it's going to do that, but believe me, it is going to do far more than that, for both baby and mother.

BLAIR: Why does it have to be mother and baby? Couldn't it be father and baby? You're shaking your head no.

LeBOYER: No -- not in the beginning. You see, all scientists are telling you that the baby of human beings is born immature, which is to say, they are looking at things now. They are saying that there are two parts in pregnancy, one which is intra-uterine, the next one which is extra-uterine, but in both stages the baby still totally needs the mother's body. It is tuned to the mother's body. I don't mean to say that the father is not important. No, he <u>is</u> no doubt. But there is a special, total deep relationship between a baby and a mother.

BLAIR: Have you spoken to any children who were a little older, perhaps two or three, who had been massaged since the moment of birth, and did you ever talk to them about their feelings about massage?

LeBOYER: You very well know that talking is meaningless. You see these children -- they talk with their whole body, not only with language, their whole body, their whole behavior -- the way they sit, the way they stand, the way they run, the way they laugh and smile -- everything expresses such an intense well-being. They are so lively that the whole thing is "expressing."

MERROW: Dr. Frederick Leboyer, talking about baby massage with Wendy.

MOTHER: With a lot of notions and feelings of different things, I think you can go off the deep end either way, that there are shades of gray with things. But, I think, it's probably a very good idea -- if nothing else, the close contact that you're setting up with your child. Too many parents don't pick up their child enough or don't give them enough love, or don't give them the strength that I think it's very important to give a child when they're very small. To be very honest with you, when I've changed my baby's diapers in here, I've been taking lotion and rubbing it on his botton and rubbing it on his arms and his little legs, because I thought maybe the guy's got something to what he has to say.

REPORTER: What kind of hopes and dreams do you have for Ramon?

MOTHER: That he be healthy, wise, and strong, and, you know, consider other peoples' feelings. You know, just be happy. You have to know how to cope with the world today to get along.

BLAIR: That mother's wishes for strength and happiness for her child are universal. Most mothers want to protect their children by controlling the environment. This is a more complicated matter for working mothers, who must worry not only about their own performance as parents but about that of the individual they hire to watch their children during the day. More and more women are going to work. The women's movement has helped sanction careers for women to a large extent. However, leaving the baby and going off to work requires a great amount of coordination -- finding the right day care center or the right baby sitter. And most working mothers experience guilt about leaving their children. Jean Curtis, the author of Working Mothers, interviewed 200 working women to find out what they are feeling and doing about parenting. This time the tables are turned, as Jean Curtis interviews an NPR working mother, Susan Stamberg.

JEAN CURTIS INTERVIEWING SUSAN STAMBERG

CURTIS: Well, first of all, you've got to tell me a little bit about yourself. You have one child?

STAMBERG: One child, who is now six years old.

CURTIS: And how long have you been working?

STAMBERG: Pretty well since the time he was a year and a half old, and I had always worked before he was born. So, essentially, I took off a year and a half when he was born, and then, went back to work.

CURTIS: Now, let me ask you first, why you took off that year and a half. What was sitting there in the back of your mind saying, "Should I be home with that child?" Is that why you did it?

STAMBERG: Yeah, pretty well. And for a whole lot of reasons, the work situation had ended, and it seemed like a convenient time for me to take off, and I wanted to try my hand at this. It was a decision I made after something like eight years of marriage, and I wanted to see how it would be. But I want to ask -- I'm going to start asking you now, instead of telling you -- what about that idea of the mother going to work at that point in her child's life? This child, now, was a year and a half. Is that a more wrenching time for a child than say going back to work at two months might be, or at seven years old might be?

CURTIS: Well, many women told me that it was, Susan. I think they found that the sooner you went back to work the better, simply because the infant could learn to count and trust in your comings and goings more easily than a toddler who had been used to your being there all the time, who is going through that rapid growth period before, say, kindergarten, and some mothers felt that they had pulled the rug out from under their baby if they stayed home for two or three years.

Now, I'm interested to know how your baby felt about your going back and, also, how you prepared your baby for your going back. Was there anything special you did?

STAMBERG: When I went back to work, it was on a part-time basis, and it was four hours a day. And I was careful to choose those hours from 11 to 3, which would bridge, basically, his nap time. I was careful to structure it that way, figuring that he'd notice my absence less because of it. And I'm not sure that I consciously prepared in any way than to get an occasional baby sitter and be away from him from time to time, and I never saw any severe reaction on his part when I did that. So, I felt fairly confident about it.

CURTIS: Yes, I would say you did exactly the right thing. A - you having stayed home for that long a time anyhow. You started back to work part time, which means you were really breaking him in. You didn't just suddenly leave for 40 hours a week, and I think also, say, a couple of months before you know you're going back to work, if you can, start gradually using more baby sitters and letting him know that you're going to start a new schedule, and being consistent with the schedule each week. Let's say, you start the first week, being gone from 2 to 4 in the afternoon. Then, he learns to trust in that, and he knows that. And then, if you somehow let him know in another week that it's going to be a different schedule, but he knows that you're going to return.

STAMBERG: But children have such a fuzzy sense of time.

CURTIS: That's why they need to count on your time clock, your consistency. The only sense of time that they really have is in pattern and routine of their day. One day is similar to another day, as long as it is in the same routine. I want to ask you another question, and that is, now that your child is six years old, and you and your husband have had some time parenting your child, who do you think is the psychological parent? Who is the parent who tunes in most to the child, who understands and knows where that kid is 24 hours of the day, in his head? Every woman said "me." Now, what do you say?

STAMBERG: I would have said to you "me," except that that's starting to change now in our family, because of some trouble that our little

guy has run into at school in the past year, having trouble getting along with friends and having trouble getting along with teachers. That made us, as parents, focus in very much more carefully on him and on what was going on with him, more than we ever did before. And it was a wonderful thing, in a way. You know, he's getting through those difficulties now, and we are, too. And, as a result, we're sharing the psychological responsibility more.

But it raises another question: Are kids whose mothers work messed up?

CURTIS: First of all, I found that the kids were marvelously well developed, adjusted well in school by and large. More importantly, none of them were in more or less trouble than any other child, of a non-working mother. Certain studies which have been done now at Harvard and the University of Chicago point significantly to the fact that working mothers' children, as opposed to non-working mothers' children, do just as well at school, sometimes even get better grades, and, indeed, seem to have no significant problems off the norm from the other children. More important, the issue comes up -- let's say your child is having a problem, and with three children I can tell you there's hardly a year when one child isn't going to have some little stage he's going through -- and what are the questions you ask yourself? Most women say, "Oh, is it because of my job?" Most teachers will look at the parent when they call them in for guidance counselor meetings and say, "Well, how are things at home?" And they look at you knowingly and they say, "Ah, you work, do you? -- uh huh." And you stare back blankly and guiltily, and then you go home and say, maybe I should quit.

STAMBERG: That's the first thing that occurs.

CURTIS: Here's what I learned: If you quit at that point, it is the worst thing you can do.

STAMBERG: Why?

CURTIS: You are dealing with a situation of stress and by removing your job you only contribute to that stress. Furthermore, you teach your child something very crucial, i.e., he has power over you, he has power to change the family dynamics. And they are very smart, these little children. Don't think for a minute that you can fool them. Now, this is very upsetting to a child. A child needs to feel secure in the fact that his mother and father understand the best way to conduct a family life, and that the child needs confidence in you, and you need confidence in yourself. So that, I found that most women, even if they did quit, did not solve the problem. Furthermore, they discovered the problem was not their working. It was something much more complex. The family problems existed with or without the job.

STAMBERG: You come out rather strongly in the book for the day care center -- properly structured, properly supervised, properly organized. I think that's something that many women are leery of. They're afraid it's institutional, and it's cold, and it's too rigid.

CURTIS: I understand that fear, and I'm interested in your experiences with it, but I find that's because day care is still a potluck affair in the United States. We have some very terrible day care

centers, and we have some wonderful ones. And I think parents have got to investigate the situation and learn to judge them. In the book, I distinguished between what I called "groovy" ones and "custodial" ones, and I used the word "groovy," because I feel that the people there are very down to earth and wear clothes that they're not afraid to dirty, get on the floor, have sticky fingers all over their laps, and they learn to make do with little money, but be very creative. "Custodial" centers are mostly interested in the safety and the health and the schedule and the routine of their children, and the help has a tendency to dress as if they were at the office, and stand up a lot. I think you have to spend more than an hour in a day center to judge if it's a good one for your child. I think you have to talk with other parents at the day care center to see how involved they are in the decisions there at the school. I don't think we should be afraid of it at all. I think when it's good, it's marvelous. When it's bad, it's disastrous.

BLAIR: Jean Curtis, author of Working Mothers, talking with NPR's Susan Stamberg.

MERROW: Curtis talked about the good points of day care centers, but not everyone agrees. In fact, Dr. Raymond Moore and Dorothy Moore believe that children should be kept at home -- not just until they're six years old, but longer -- until they're eight or ten.

> DR. MOORE: We believe that all of the other children are the children whose parents are able to take care of them and who will see their children's liberty and their maximum potential as priorities before their own private interests. All of those children, which would constitute perhaps 65 to 75 per cent of the children of America, should be at home.

MERROW: Dr. Raymond Moore and Dorothy Moore, authors of Better Late Than Early.

DR. RAYMOND MOORE & DOROTHY MOORE

DR. MOORE: We say eight to ten, and you are talking about formal schooling; Stanford Research Institute and some psychologists at Cal and at Rochester, and so on, would say ten to fourteen.

STAMBERG: What's the reason for pushing off the beginning of formal schooling until the age of eight to ten, or even ten or fourteen?

DR. MOORE: We have come to the conclusion that the young child's brain is not ready, in terms of neurophysiological balance; as a reasoning person, he is not yet ready until he is eight to ten. There are many very skillful and highly qualified child psychiatrists clear up to John Bolby who say that it would be better if children were not out of the home until around eight.

STAMBERG: And what do you do with them until they're ten?

MRS. MOORE: Well, this is the thing that we think that many good parents can do, is just to have a rich home background, warm consistent care with plenty of activities that are available in the average home. We find that many parents feel that they're really not

capable of giving the children this type of experience, because they've been brainwashed, so to speak, by educators, who have tried to make them feel that they're not capable of handling their children at these young ages.

STAMBERG: I can just hear the screams of outrage from parents across America to the idea of keeping the child at home until the age of 10. And there are so many buts that I want to raise with you -- let's just kind of do them one at a time. First of all, this idea that the ability to be ready for a sustained learning program.

DR. MOORE: The point is that if the child has a reasonably good mothering and fathering, he will know enough about fractions and numbers, and reading, and so on, so that if you put him into school at age 8, say, in the third grade -- not in the first, by the way -- this child will quickly catch up and pass the other children, and he will be more sociable. He will come out down the road ten years as a better sociable creature, a better achiever, better behaved, and all around, better developed. I realize that this is not the conventional wisdom. Nor was it the conventional wisdom, say, thirty years ago to worry about environmental ecology, but now we realize we've got ourselves a problem in the environment, so we're approaching the thing massively. Now, we're saying — we have a human ecology problem. Remember now, we're old public school people, but when you look at the amount of youngsters, especially little boys, like we say, 35 to 40 percent of the children fail the first grade or are retarded in the reading areas, and you compare that with the youngsters, for example, in Sweden and Norway where they go to school at 7, and you have about a two to three or four or five percent reading disability, you get some reason why we say that we're damaging our children. We really are.

STAMBERG: I don't know what's happening to the institution of the family in Sweden and Norway, but there are awful clear-cut signs about what's happening to the institution of the family in this country. And I just wonder how realistic you are in asking parents to take on tasks like that. First of all, they're not equally suited to those tasks. You need the wise and loving mother, and you don't have all those wise and loving mothers.

DR. MOORE: We're saying, though, let's start spending our time training parents, and our money, too - use our personnel, start training some teachers - loving, thoughtful, kind people to work with parents in the home, and begin restoring the home. We're not suggesting a complicated gobbledygook thing in the home where the parents have to be "pedagogues." We want parents simply to be loving and responsive and consistent, even remotely so; and the kids will come out better than if they had gone to school.

STAMBERG: Is that really enough, just being loving and consistent? Doesn't the teacher provide the professional background, the years of training that she or he received, wide experience with all kinds of kids?

MRS. MOORE: This is what educators have tried to make parents feel.

DR. MOORE: And some are.

MRS. MOORE: And it's probably true that there are some inadequate parents, and this is where it is necessary to provide some preschool

for some children, but just because we provide it for some children who do not have adequate backgrounds, does not necessarily mean that we must use tax money to provide it for all children when, actually, they would be better off in the homes that can provide this.

STAMBERG: What about the bulk of information that shows that the child goes through his major intellectual development from ages 1 to 4?

DR. MOORE: Actually, the child -- surely, he develops very rapidly during those years -- no question about that -- perhaps the most rapid of all of his development, but he's developing potential, not half of his learning. So, no -- the best stimulation shown by comparative school entrance age studies shows that the child who starts to school late comes off the higher achiever. He comes off more socialized, better behaved, and better developed in an all around sense, even in terms of creativity.

MERROW: Dr. Raymond Moore and Dorothy Moore, authors of Better Late Than Early.

(MUSIC - "My Daddy and Me")

FATHER: We share and share alike. If she is sick, I'll go to the laundromat -- me and my kids. They love to travel with daddy.

BLAIR: Parenting has replaced mothering as the code word for child care. The emphasis on equality for the sexes perhaps means that fathers should play a bigger role in their children's lives. Here's more from pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock on the updated version of his book.

SPOCK: I think that fathers are capable of the nurturing role. I'm not minimizing the mother's nurturing role. I'm only saying fathers can be just as nurturing as mothers.

BLAIR: Dr. Spock talks about the changes in baby and child care with Sue Lieberman and Margaret West of Station WAMU in Washington, D.C.

DR. BENJAMIN SPOCK

SPOCK: The main purpose in revising was not because I had become wiser myself, but because I had been skinned alive by the women's liberation movement, beginning about 1970. They pointed out, correctly, that Baby and Child Care is sexist, and they said if we're going to eradicate sexism, we've got to start by avoiding discrimination in infancy and early childhood. And I entirely agree. Part of it is simply the mechanical business of pronouns. You know, all through the previous editions the baby and the child were called "he," and I apologized right from the first edition to the parents of girls, saying I loved girls just as much as boys, but I had to save "she" for the mother. But, of course, that was sexist, too, because the book really is addressed to the mother all the way through. There are some sections that mention the father or appeal to the father, but in past editions, it was really addressed to the mother, and I don't think it should be anymore. In other words, I'm convinced now that fathers have certainly an equal responsibility in

child rearing, and if a mother wants a career, the father should be doing half the child care, to be a little arbitrary about it. I think in actually talking to mothers, lots of them over the years, the thing that they resent most is the father who comes home and, then, hides behind his evening newspaper all evening, especially when they get to quarrels with their children. Children are tired at the end of the day, and it's when they are usually more quarrelsome than they are in the morning. And the mother is particularly anxious to get out of that role of judge or "nag" that she's been all day, and she'd like to have her husband be the one who pounces on the children or tells them "cut that out" or "I saw you hit her" and so on. And it's an interesting thing, though. I think a number of American fathers participate actively in child care, but I think that they dread becoming the judge, the scolder, the punisher. I've been told by fathers who are trying to defend themselves against their wife's urging to get in there and take over the discipline, "I don't want to come home and immediately be told who's been bad today and that I've got to scold him, or I've got to spank him."

The most difficult parts to revise were what is the relationship of mother and father, or the participation of mother and father in case the mother wants a fulltime career. And it was easy for me to say women have just as much right to an uninterrupted career as their husbands.

LIEBERMAN: I presume, Dr. Spock, that you agree that the health of our society depends on the units, and that is the family which, in turn, make up the society, and therefore, that would be why you'd advocate that parents share the child rearing, and so on?

SPOCK: Yes -- While I'm talking, I don't mean that you can't hire somebody, and certainly what a lot of professional women and men end up doing is either hiring somebody who has the personality that they want to come in to take care of the child, or to put the child out into family day care. Relatively few people will agree with this, but the government should pay the parents to stay home from work to take care of their children, whether it's the father or whether it's the mother, or whether each of them is sacrificing part of their work day, that this would be worthwhile for the society as a whole, because the attention to child rearing would be given. That's the most important thing for the state, I think, to foster.

WEST: So many things are different since 1947 -- did you say was the first edition?

SPOCK: '46.

WEST: '46 -- A lot of things have changed, and one of them is that women are having children later in life.

SPOCK: I saw a study. It was a relatively superficial one a number of years ago which showed that it isn't true that the young parent is the flexible one who can take care of children more naturally because the parent is only a few years away from childhood. It showed very clear that the average young parent is more intolerant of children and that the older parent is more tolerant, more understanding, and less interfering, which is interesting.

I think there's nothing more difficult than trying to bring up your children entirely different than the way you were brought up. I think everybody wants to change the rearing of their

children a little from the way they were reared, and I think that can be done in many respects. But, basically, you learn to be a parent by having been a child. I think that perhaps the difficulty that we're having nowadays with quite a number of parents being sort of scared of their children or being hesitant about being firm, not feeling secure about telling their children what they think is right and wrong, especially in adolescence, is that we may be at a very significant turning point in the history of our whole human civilization. I think it's in the twentieth century that we've become cognizant of the fact that children are human beings by themselves. Freud pointed this out, and Dewey pointed it out, and other people.

WEST: How can we best be good parents? What can we say to ourselves when the going is rough?

SPOCK: I've said in Baby and Child Care try to enjoy your children, and I've tried to say it's love and it's the relationship between you and them, rather than the scoldings. And I think that these are most important.

BLAIR: Dr. Benjamin Spock, talking with Sue Lieberman and Margaret West of Station WAMU in Washington, D.C.

(MUSIC - "My Daddy and Me")

MERROW: One force in society that is shaking the American family in making child rearing difficult is divorce. Nearly half the marriages this year will eventually break up. Divorce creates new stresses on mothers and fathers, but most often, it's the father who becomes a part-time parent. Estell Rubin talks about her book, The Divorced Father, with Susan Stamberg.

ESTELL RUBIN

RUBIN: He had nowhere to turn, nobody paid very much attention to him. There wasn't anything that we could say -- "Well, that's a good book for you to read," whereas mothers have been written about extensively.

STAMBERG: Why do you think this is? Because I think you're right -- you tend to focus on the mother and on the child -- the father you figure can take care of himself.

RUBIN: Well, I don't even know whether the father is figured to take care of himself or that, until recently, fatherhood was played down. It wasn't seen as a very important function. The father was there to bring the money home and to take care of the family, but his involvement with the children was not real -- it was kind of denigrated.

STAMBERG: I also think it has to do with the difference in ability for the sexes to ask for help.

RUBIN: I was thinking more along the lines that we just focus on the mother. The mother is the nurturing, caring person, and the father's out there somewhere. And I know in child guidance agencies the experience has been you call the mother in, and only recently has the emphasis been on what we call "we work with the mother and the father."

STAMBERG: How to begin helping him to put the pieces back together in his life, especially when this whole problem of visiting rights crops up -- he's no longer a fulltime father.

RUBIN: But he is a father. This is one of the mistakes that many fathers and mothers make. Well, he's a part-time father; he only sees the children part of the time, a very small portion of the time, so what influence can he have? And this discourages the man. But, really, once you're a father, you're always a father. This isn't a relationship that can be broken, unless you want to break it. So that, whether you see your children on a fulltime basis -- and very few men do that -- they work -- they come home late -- they're weekend fathers, too.

STAMBERG: So, just make the weekend more meaningful. You write beautifully in the epilogue to your book about the fathers you see in McDonald's on Saturday.

RUBIN: The two sitting there, kind of uncomfortable, bored, sullen -- the father anxious, pushing another hamburger on the kid. You can spot them in the park, too. It doesn't have to be McDonald's. You can spot them walking along the street. They exude an air of not being comfortable with one another. Finally, after some period of time, some fathers do make it. Most fathers make it. They begin to feel comfortable with their children.

STAMBERG: But part of the expression of discomfort and the wish to make it gets into buying things, doesn't it? Giving the kid a good time, entertaining him?

RUBIN: Right -- most divorced fathers see their "visitation time" as a time when they have to be a good-time Charlie, or as some fathers described themselves, as a Santa Claus. And out of their anxiety and not knowing what to do, they buy and buy things for the kids, or they set up a program that's like a three-ring circus.

STAMBERG: You're running here, you're running there, you're going to the circus in the afternoon, or you're going out for a huge sundae.

RUBIN: Right -- that's the whole bit, but we feel that this really isn't the way to have a relationship with your child, and that when a man kind of settles down in himself and doesn't feel so anxious and so uncomfortable, and sees himself really as a father who doesn't have to create a party atmosphere for his child, but who allows the child to learn to know him and to be with him, just as he would be if he were at home.

STAMBERG: Just being together.

RUBIN: Being together, doing things together, certainly, but normal kinds of things, like -- let's say the father lives alone -- Maybe he'd save his marketing for the weekend and take his kids with him and let them share in the marketing, and they might be able to cook a meal together. This doesn't mean that they have to exclude themselves from the world and that they can't go to a movie sometime, but the emphasis should be on a natural kind of living together, so the child really gets to know his father, and the father gets to know the child.

STAMBERG: What about the relationship that's just ended between the father and the mother, and the bitter residue of that relationship?

How do they keep in touch with one another? How can the father usefully keep channels of communication open so that they can talk about the kid without all that past rancor cropping up?

RUBIN: Well, that is a tough one, but it is something that we feel strongly should be done -- there are people who do feel that once the parents are divorced they should have absolutely no contact with one another. We feel that this is unnatural, that, first of all, once you have children in common, you may be divorced, but you are still kin. You have a relationship that is bound up in your children who you are involved with. You're concerned about their growth and their education, and both parents are.

STAMBERG: So, what do you do? You wait for a crisis and then get on the phone together? Or do you plan regular phone conversations or meetings or something to keep track of what's going on?

RUBIN: I think for most people meetings are pretty difficult. There are ways of communicating. It depends on the situation. If there isn't too much rancor, well, certainly a meeting or a telephone conversation, or a letter. These are ways of keeping in touch. If the mother realizes that a father is important for a child, she will make an effort, and it takes a big one, to try to separate her hostility towards this man who was her husband from the fact that he is the father of her children, and the father will have to do the same thing.

STAMBERG: So, don't lose sight of what the particular situation and problem is.

RUBIN: Yes, to keep your eye on the ball, and the ball in this instance is the child or children.

STAMBERG: You tell a wonderful story about a father named Ed F. and his son, Randy.

RUBIN: This is a little different example of anger, but it's where a father is afraid to discipline a child, because he's afraid of alienating the child, and children can interpret this in very different ways than we think. And as this story will illustrate, this father was really at the edge of his rope with this child who had been acting up and behaving rudely. They were in a restaurant, and the child behaved so badly to the waiter. He was really insolent, and finally, the father really told him off. And the child's response to him was, "I didn't think you cared how I behaved."

STAMBERG: A tremendous relief, in other words.

RUBIN: Relief, and also he was obviously acting and trying to test his father to see, "Does he really care what I do?" And so many fathers are not aware of this, and they walk on eggshells, because they feel, well, I'm only with him 24 hours, 48 hours -- why should I be the one to spoil our time, but it's not spoiling the time. This is something that I think that fathers have to understand, that every minute of their time with their child doesn't have to be a great, glorious party, that you are a father as long as you live. This is a relationship that will go on and on, and you don't have to measure and test each visit and score it and say, "Well, today was pretty good -- I get a B for that -- maybe next week it will be better." Some days are good, and some days aren't.

MERROW: Estell Rubin, author of Part-Time Parents.

BLAIR: The women's movement and divorce aren't the only factors that are influencing families. Another important one is birth control. Parents of the future will, for the most part, be people who choose to have children. Brian Sutton Smith thinks this is a good sign.

SMITH: I'm Brian Sutton Smith, a professor of child psychology, and for about twenty or thirty years of my existence, I've been studying children's play and games, and I've written a lot of books about it. And so, I am really vividly involved with what on earth that all meant, what was it to play, what was it to act, what role does it have in recreating the human being as we know him now. That's my thing.

BLAIR: Smith, Head of Columbia University's Program in Developmental Psychology, talks about education and the family of the future with NPR Reporter Connie Goldman.

BRIAN SUTTON SMITH

SMITH: It's not until you graduate that you really can be let loose with children. Parents really have to know themselves in a professional sense. The thing that intrigues me is the possibility of a school designed so the parents will enjoy being there as much as children. I don't think anybody has really ever thought of that. I see the idea of parents working with children's materials as a way of experiencing what children go through. Many parents crave for an opportunity to go through that again and find out what really happened, because most of us have forgotten. We don't know anything much at all about all that period. There are a few elusive images. You can't do this with parents just sort of in a sloppy way. People have to be professionally trained to be able to be themselves at various age levels, or rather children at various age levels. Most parents are embarrassed by this, or get simply regressive if they're let loose on this.

There are clinical problems here. You really couldn't do this sort of training without certain clinical oversight. The answer, I think, is professionalization of the acting. The adults have to see children of an age on films. They have to watch children of an age, and then they have to be shown how one can model or mimic these various processes. Some of them are easy. I mean, trying out the child's act is quite simple, but trying to be like a child at that level of mimicry, that's quite an advanced form of development.

GOLDMAN: Do you really think that if a parent could put this kind of time into understanding the growth and education process of his child that he would expand as an adult by getting back some of his own childhood?

SMITH: That's the whole idea. The interest in this is not just for your child -- it's for yourself. You become a much more total person. There's a concept in psychology called psychological mobility, and it's sometimes said that some artists have this access to themselves, and that's one of the reasons they're so creative. Now, we don't really know whether that's true or not -- there's some evidence in favor of it. But that's the sort of thought that I'm

following here, that to some extent -- probably a limited extent -- but much more so than is generally thought, we can do the same thing for most adults, or those who are willing or interested.

You see, I think the parents of the future are going to be a much more selected breed. People are going to be parents because they want to. It is increasingly the case. And people who don't want to go through this readjustment themselves are going to select the act-- I hope so. Whereas those who want to have kids will be prepared to go through these extra rigors of self-discovery and so on. Most parents increasingly find that having kids is an incredible burden -- the more advanced the mother is these days the tougher she finds the job. She doesn't just do it in a habit-reflex way like she used to do it. She's finding it tough. She needs a lot of help.

The whole society needs to focus more on the young married couple who are trying to get liberation for both of them and who really want to have kids still. Those people need a lot of help and a whole new way of being trained in the situation. We're not doing a damn thing about it. I think we've got to start thinking about it, conceptualizing it, and then, once you've done that people begin to try it out, and you get little experiments going. People find out how far you can take this thing, how well does it work in different systems and different places, and so on.

BLAIR: Brian Sutton Smith of Columbia University, talking with NPR Reporter Connie Godman.

MOTHER: I think it's one of the most exciting things that ever happened to me, other than the day I got married and met my husband -- was becoming a parent. And every day you're learning something. It's marvelous.

REPORTER: You learn something every day, but how do you know how to be a parent?

MOTHER: I don't know. I think -- it sounds dumb -- you talk to all your neighbors and you call people in a panic sometimes. But a lot of it, they say that it's instinct -- when you're going to be a mother that all of a sudden you know all the answers -- and you don't know all the answers, as I'm sure you're aware of, after talking to a lot of other people. But it's through trial and error. And this is my second baby, and I firmly believe that everybody needs to have a second baby so that they can put to use everything that they learned on their first baby, because I was talking to some people yesterday, and I said I'm much more afraid of my second child than I was of my first child, because my first child I just figured it was all right to do anything. So, I just did everything and nearly killed him. And my second one, now, I'm thinking I really shouldn't be doing this, and I shouldn't be doing that.

(MUSIC - "Be Kind to Your Parents")

MERROW: Material for this program came in part from Sue Lieberman and Margaret West of Station WAMU and Tim Cox in Washington, D.C. Special thanks to Susan Stamberg, co-host of NPR's ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.

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(CLOSING THEME)

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